

AMENDMENT AND RESPONSE UNDER 37 CFR § 1.111
Serial Number: 09/442,048
Filing Date: November 16, 1999
Title: SITE HOME NAVIGATION

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REMARKS

Claims 44-46 are added by this Amendment. As a result, claims 1-46 are now pending in the application.

§102 Rejection of the Claims

The Office Action includes a rejection of claims 1-43 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) in view of U.S. Patent 6,336,116 ("Brown"). This rejection is respectfully traversed, for at least the reasons set forth herein.

The present invention involves methods and systems for locating and navigating to a site home of a network site (e.g., to an Internet home page). As discussed in the Background of the present application, with conventional systems, the ability of users to navigate to the site home of a network site from another page within the site is dictated exclusively by the author of the network site. Unfortunately, many authors do not provide a "home" navigation mechanism to aid users in reaching the site home or home page. When a user enters such a site to a page other than the home page (for example, by using a search engine to jump to a page with specific content) it can be difficult to navigate to the site's home page using conventional systems. Even if the author chooses to include a home site navigation mechanism, it may be configured in any number of formats and, in some instances, the user may be required to pass through intermediate pages to get to the home site. Thus, even though a website may have a conventional home site navigation mechanism installed, a user must first figure how to use it and may be required to take a circuitous route back to the site home. The present invention overcomes these drawbacks.

The present invention allows a user to easily and conveniently navigate to the site home—even though the user may have entered the site at a point other than the home site and the site may not be equipped with a mechanism indicating the path to the site home. Various embodiments of the present invention provide the aforementioned advantages of home site navigation to users. For example, the user's browser can be configured with a site home navigation button 302 similar to the one shown in Figure 3A. This embodiment provides the added advantage of navigation consistency from one site to the next, even though some sites have no home site navigation mechanism while others may have one of various home site

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navigation mechanisms in place. That is, by using the present invention, a user will be provided with a consistent system for navigating to the site home (e.g., the home navigation button 302 of Figure 3A). By contrast, with conventional site-specific systems a user would be required to determine whether a particular site has any home navigation mechanism in place, and then figure out the specifics of that mechanism.

The Office Action relies cites the Brown patent, asserting that Brown teaches all features of the present invention. This assertion is respectfully traversed.

The Brown patent involves a method for searching a specified host system, and providing an index to that host system. The system described in the Brown patent is useful "for identifying which documents in a database contain user-specified data."^a This is done, according to Brown, by providing a list of documents from a particular database (or website) which contain the search text specified by the user. The Brown patent outlines additional site-specific search capabilities, stating that the Brown system "makes it possible to display excerpts (i.e., segments) from each document found in the search."^b However, the system described in the Brown patent does not determine which page of a website is the home page. In fact, the Brown patent does not distinguish a site's home page from any other page of the site. The Brown patent does not even mention home pages or home sites. Instead, the Brown patent outlines a manual registration process which a system administrator sends out forms to collect optional information including contact information and entry points URLs of a website, as per the following:^c

Prior to performing site-specific searching using the present invention, it is necessary for a Web site provider to set up an account. FIGS. 4 and 5 show how this is done. More specifically, as shown in FIG. 5, a Web site provider's representative, such as their system administrator, issues request 40, over network 41 (e.g., the Internet), to a host computer system running search and index hosting application 39. In response, search and index hosting 39 retrieves Web page forms required to set up a new account from storage 42, and transmits these forms back to the provider's representative, where the forms are displayed on the representative's computer. As shown in FIG. 5, displayed form 44 requests "contact" information, (e.g., information regarding the provider's Web site) and entry point URLs for the site. This contact information may be input in step S401 of FIG. 4.

^a Brown, col. 3, lines 20-21.

^b Brown, col. 3, lines 62-64.

^c Brown, col. 5, line 65 to col. 6, line 13.

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The system administrator of the Brown system does not determine which of the multiple entry points, if any, is a home site during the aforementioned procedure for gathering and inputting contact information.^d In fact, the contact information and entry point URLs are not necessary to practice Brown's site-specific indexing system. The Brown patent states that, "[o]f course, the invention is not limited to using three entry point URLs, and even can be used without entering the contact information."^e

Accordingly, the Brown patent does not disclose "determining a site home for the network site," as recited in each of claims 1, 16 and 43 or a "program of instructions for configuring the information handling system to determine and navigate to a site home of a network site in the information network from a site page within the network site," as recited in claim 31.

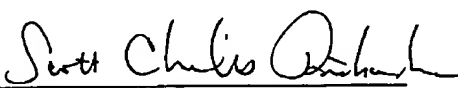
Conclusion

It is respectfully submitted that the claims are in condition for allowance. Notification to that effect is earnestly requested. In the event that issues arise in the application which may readily be resolved via telephone, the Examiner is kindly invited to telephone Applicant's attorney at (605)232-1967 to facilitate prosecution of the application.

A Fee Transmittal is being sent in conjunction with this Amendment for fees owed for the newly added claims. If necessary, please charge any additional fees or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-0439.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: October 2, 2002

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^d Brown, col. 5, line 65 to col. 6, line 12.

^e Brown, col. 6, line 21-23.